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Observations on the System by which Estates  
are managed in Jamaica

1836

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# OBSERVATIONS

ON

## THE SYSTEM

BY WHICH

ESTATES HAVE BEEN AND ARE STILL MANAGED

IN JAMAICA;

AND ON THE

**Apprenticeship**

INTRODUCED BY

THE RECENT ABOLITION ACT.

---

BY A PROPRIETOR.

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## OBSERVATIONS, &c.

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Few have experienced more disappointment in their pecuniary circumstances, or have had their hopes more blasted, and their characters more vilified, than West India proprietors and others supported from property, formerly cultivated by slaves, now by apprentices.

By some, their embarrassments have been ascribed to profligacy and extravagance, and by others to the hand of Providence, as a punishment for participating in the profits of slave labour; but both allegations are alike unfounded and unjust, for almost in every case, the proprietors, legatees, and annuitants, were ignorant of the existence of the evil which was gradually ruining them, and hence did not consider interference necessary.

It is true, that from ignorance of their own affairs, and from misrepresentation of the value or annual income of the property to which they succeeded, many were induced to live beyond their means,—this evil, as well as almost every other, might have been prevented by proprietors living in Jamaica, and personally managing their properties, in place of living in England.

The hope of realizing a fortune, and in due time returning to his native country, allured the enterprising youth from his

home, and induced him to cultivate the soil and participate in the trade of Jamaica. At the period to which this refers, every encouragement was held out by government to induce those who had saved a little money by their industry, to invest it in human stock, to add to the profits of a trade which could not be carried on without inflicting the most barbarous cruelties, as well as without rendering callous the best feelings of the human heart, and leading to immoralities of the most revolting kind.

Some, no doubt, died in pursuit of the object which they sought for, others obtained it, and continued their labours with a view to increase the value of their possessions for their successors. A considerable number, after acquiring fortunes, returned to their native land, and spent the remainder of their days there. In the latter case, while the proprietor lived, it became necessary to have a representative in Jamaica who was called an attorney; and in the former, the property was left to the management of executors, while the heirs residing in the mother country, knew nothing of Jamaica matters, and were deluded by false representations from executors and attornies, and by ideas of wealth and greatness which these delusive representations led them to suppose they possessed. Custom, together with the absence of proprietors, gave rise to a most arrogant, extravagant, and, in many cases, bad mode of management. Previous to the abolition of slavery, the overseer saved deficiency for 100 slaves, and a white person was required for every 50 above that number, consequently an estate with 300 slaves, required four book-keepers to save deficiency, although their services were not otherwise necessary on the estate. By the present deficiency law an overseer serves for 80, and a book-keeper for 40 apprentices. The number of white persons required by custom, and by this law, not only increased the expenses, but encouraged dissipation and immorality. The attorney appoints the overseer, and the latter engages the book-keepers.

The attorney got his appointment always through the re-

commendation of some friend. His abilities as a planter, his industry or honesty, was seldom taken into consideration. Indeed, his constituents in general knew not whether he possessed the necessary qualities or not. When a new attorney took charge of a property, he generally dismissed the overseer to make room for some friend of his own, who was out of a situation, and owed him money.

Indeed, it very often happened, that a good overseer was dismissed from caprice, whim, or prejudice, or because he did not provide a *sumptuous meal*, &c. &c. for the appetite of his employer when he visited the property.

The fee of the attorneys, where no salary is fixed, is, according to law, 6 per cent. on the value of the annual crop, and in proportion as they acquire friends and influence, their attorneyships increase. Formerly, an individual would have held 50 or 60 attorneyships in different parts of the island, some of these he visited once in the year, or twice, according to circumstances, viz. convenience of situation, a plentiful supply of provision for himself and friends, and other similar attractions. He often knew little about the property, although his description to his constituents had the appearance of being most minute, and was considered to be the result of personal investigation and indefatigable industry for their behoof.

On an estate of considerable size, the salary of the overseer is only from L.150 to L.200, but his establishment may, from the fashion of the times, cause an annual expense of L.1000, or perhaps upwards.

This may appear strange to those who have not had an opportunity of witnessing the manner in which establishments of this kind are formed and kept up; and the veracity of the statement will be denied by those who are benefited by it. The following particulars, however, will satisfy the unprejudiced as to the truth of the above representation.

There are generally the following persons about an overseer's house.

Cooks 2, Washerwomen 2,	4
Females old and young, about Overseer's house, and Book-keeper's barracks, for cleaning apartments and for other odd purposes,	8
House boys 2, Stable boys 2,	4
Boys and men attending hogs, goats, sheep, and other small stock,	5
Cutting and carrying grass for Overseer's horses,	4
Boy going messages,	1
	<hr/> 26

Wages of 13, say 1s. 3d. each	L.0 16 3
And of 13, say 1s. 8d	1 1 8

Amount of wages per day	L.1 17 11
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Amount per annum—Working 5 days in the week, as each apprentice takes 2 days in the week to himself, and some $2\frac{1}{2}$ , which ren- ders a greater number of domestics neces- sary, as some of them are generally taking days,	L.492 15 4
Expense of growing 400 bushels of corn at 10s.	200 0 0
Ditto of raising provisions and vegetables	100 0 0
Salary of overseer	200 0 0
Do. of four Book-keepers	240 0 0
	<hr/> L.1232 15 4

It seldom happens that the attorney has any place of residence belonging to himself, so that he generally resides on one of the estates under his charge. He occupies what is called the Great House, and causes an expense to the estate, equal to, if not greater than the *presumed* expenditure of the

overseer, for he scruples not to add to, or alter the house to please his fancy, or extend his accommodation.

Suppose the attorney has a commission of L.500 per annum, and suppose he occasions an expense to the estate of L.1000, these items, added to the expense of the overseer's establishment, will amount to upwards of L.2400. Now, here is a surplus expenditure occasioned by the system, of L.1500, and without any benefit, for there is no doubt that the estate would be better managed without an attorney, even in the absence of the proprietor. Let it be entirely under the charge of the manager, with a salary of L.600 or L.700, according to the extent of the estate, and a furnished house, the manager to find himself in servants and every thing else. Some of the present overseers, it is true, do not possess that stability of character which would warrant their holding such responsible situations, although all of them assume a style of living suitable to a man of more wealth than the value of the estates which they manage, and of the highest respectability. If this plan were adopted, individuals would not be advanced to the situation of manager, until they proved by their conduct that they were trust-worthy ; which, besides being an advantage to their employers, would be a general good to the whole community.

The ignorance, and absence of proprietors, have afforded their representatives an opportunity of assuming an importance, and usurping a liberty of acting, which ought only to belong to the former.

The attorneys buy and sell, build up and cast down ; and the manager borrows, and lends, and exchanges the labour and goods of the estate. In most cases, there is a heavy mortgage debt against the estate, the interest of which, added to the commission in the sale and produce of supplies, the freight of both, and other profits connected with the merchant's transactions, yield a handsome return to him, for his advances ; while the proprietor is entirely dependent on the liberality of the merchant for a further advance, the proceeds

of the crop being minus some hundreds, the enormous annual expenditure caused by this extravagant and profligate management. Thus, while many are living in ease and affluence, and devouring the estate, the owner is only a genteel beggar, and dare not assume half the consequence of his overseer and attorney.

By the system here described, many have been reduced to poverty who considered themselves out of its reach, while it is too late to recover their lost fortunes, as the mortgages have been foreclosed, and they have now no interest in the property which they once called their own.

Much, however, may be done by those who can still, according to law, call themselves owners, although their properties may be considerably burdened. Let all proprietors who can disengage themselves from their mother country, go to Jamaica and reside on their own properties; they will then save the expense of an establishment at home, live comfortably with little outlay, save an attorney's fee, and check many improprieties of conduct as well as unnecessary expenses. They have little to fear on the score of health, with common caution—the climate of Jamaica is not so unhealthy as it is represented to be. The greatest inconvenience which persons of this class would feel in the present state of the colony, would be the want of society, and this would soon be remedied by emigration.

Resident proprietors would not only improve their own circumstances, and check the evils in management here alluded to, but they would contribute to the general prosperity of the country, by taking a lively interest in the improvement of the peasantry. In all countries where the proprietors reside, the peasantry are more industrious, more moral, and more civilized, than where they do not. No mere representative can feel the same interest in the people, nor can the people in him.

During the continuance of slavery, there was little done by any to instruct and civilize the slave; but when improvement

did take place, it was either by the presence of the proprietor, or by a mandate from him.

Attornies and overseers may have charge of estates to-day, and be removed from them to-morrow; consequently, the same reciprocity of feeling between them and the apprentices is not to be expected. The present system, by which the apprentices are managed, is unnatural in all its parts, and but ill adapted to promote their improvement either as to industry or civilization.

The overseer has no influence with the people, for he seldom uses any persuasion to induce them to do their duty, and trusts entirely to the administration of the law through the medium of the special magistrate. This has the effect of estranging the people from the soil, and of inducing them to withhold a proper degree of respect from those to whom it belongs, as well as from their representatives. They naturally look to the special magistrate as their protector, and think themselves independent of the good or bad opinion of all others, never thinking that these guardians are merely itinerant judges for the time, have neither property nor influence beyond the office which they hold, and have no voice in the framing of those laws by which the whole community is governed. Can it be denied that this authority is calculated, on the one hand, to engender feelings of disrespect in the minds of the peasantry towards those on whom they are dependent; and on the other, disgust and indifference to those by whose capital, benevolence, influence, and personal exertions, they alone can be ultimately and pre-eminently benefited? But while I affirm that these are the natural consequences of the present state of affairs as regards apprentice, and proprietor, and manager, I am far from saying that an apprenticeship is not advantageous to both parties—apprentice and master; or that the office of special magistrate is unnecessary, or indeed can be dispensed with.

Independently of the propriety of abolishing slavery, it was high time that the power of punishing should be taken out

of the hands of managers, book-keepers, and headmen, all of whom occasionally abused their misplaced authority ; but surely there were men to be found in Jamaica sufficiently humane, talented, honourable, and destitute of prejudice, to join in the administration of the apprenticeship law, who, from their wealth and influence, would have secured the respect of the peasantry, and counteracted the evils here complained of, while they would have fostered that reciprocity of feeling between the peasant and those interested in the soil, which is natural and beneficial to both.

One half of the special magistrates should have been selected from the local magistrates in the colonies, or from the respectable and wealthy class of the community. This would have made up for the want of experience on the part of those who received their appointment in the mother country, and the latter would have checked the prejudices of the former. In this case only half the number of special magistrates would have been paid, and even these, after the two or three first years, might have relieved each other, by obtaining leave of absence when their health required it, (at least their services would not in my opinion be required,) their salaries continuing till the apprenticeship ended. One object of the apprenticeship was to prepare the people for entire freedom, by improving their minds, by educating the young, and by more familiar intercourse with the old, inducing them to know their duty, and to perform it without coercion. But although one-third of the apprenticeships have already expired, I regret to say that little has been done to forward the one object, and the natural progress of the other has been retarded by causes already referred to. It is not to be expected that the people in their present state of ignorance can appreciate the value of education and the blessing of religious instruction ; attention to these must therefore be enforced by law, by persuasion, by rewards, and by punishments. Now, who can do this but the proprietors of the soil, and others possessing influence and capital in the community ? It is their province as well as

their interest to do so, but they have neither the inclination nor the influence to do it with effect.

The want of the former arises, in some measure, from neglecting their duty to their inferiors, and from an erroneous opinion that the peasantry are incapable of improvement; and the latter arises from the feeling which is produced in the minds of manager and apprentice by an intermediate authority.

The manager supposes that the special magistrate (but it is an erroneous supposition in most cases), induces the apprentice to entertain notions of disrespect and indifference towards him, and this feeling makes him regardless of the comfort and improvement of the people. The magistrates are thus unjustly accused of improper interference, and even calumniated, and the people are accused of ingratitude, and insubordination, when neither the one nor the other are guilty of the alleged charge. The system is the parent of this unnatural and rebellious state of things, and also of the continuance of certain prejudices and habits which slavery produced and confirmed. It cannot be denied, that many overseers, previous to the abolition act, treated the slaves *harshly*, and enforced their orders by instruments more applicable to beasts than human beings, while they never condescended to make use of reason or persuasion, or even to treat them as rational creatures. In these cases, it is as unnatural for the same manager now to forget his tyrannical demeanour, and to treat the apprentices as members of the rational community, as it is natural for the apprentices to rejoice at his chagrin, and to cherish a spirit of revenge. On this account, managers who have not much of the *old school* learning, get on better with the special magistrate and the people, than those who were (erroneously) considered superior planters, merely because they wielded the whip more dexterously than their neighbours. Had there been a general change of managers when slavery ceased, the special magistrate would have had fewer complaints from both manager and apprentice; and

the latter would have been less troublesome and more attentive to his duty. A considerable portion of the special magistrates are well qualified to discharge the duties of the office, and do so independently and conscientiously, and in so far as their proceedings have come under my knowledge, I can vouch for the truth of this. I can speak particularly of those in the parishes of St. Thomas in the East, and St. Davids, viz. Messrs. Bain, Willis, Lyon, and Dunne.— With the conduct and decisions of the two latter I am well acquainted, and have cause to approve of them. I do not think the conduct or writings of these gentlemen warranted, in any measure, the blame which has been attached to them.

That some have been appointed in the mother country, and some by the governor in the island, unfit for the situation, is certain; and in corroboration of this, it may be stated, that a few have shewn themselves arrant fools, and have made an improper use of the power vested in them by insulting men of respectability in the presence of their dependents, and by encouraging a spirit of contempt in the minds of the apprentices towards their superiors. No man should be appointed to the situation, who is not, from his education, rank, manners, and experience, entitled to respect from all classes. If he does not possess these qualities, he will be sure to disgust the respectable and intelligent part of the community; and this disgust will be increased by the vanity and self-conceit with which he will endeavour to supply their place. This vanity and self-conceit will lead him to resent, as far as he can, the want of respect and confidence on the part of those whom he cannot command. He will lavish his favour on their inferiors, that his popularity with the latter may, in some measure, compensate for the want of it with their masters. The effect of his partiality will be extremely injurious, alienating from one another parties whose interests can only be promoted by mutual confidence and sympathy.

The jarrings thus excited, cannot fail to do much mischief to the apprentices, and will exist to a certain extent, so long

as the present system continues. The effect of them, together with an ill-timed interference on the part of the governor, shewing a strong bias to excuse indolence and palliate crime, will be most hurtful to the very people, whose welfare the governor is anxious to promote, and will greatly retard their improvement.

The general opinion of the *old time* planters, and many others who have lived long in the colony is, that the negroes are ungrateful, and crafty in their dispositions; that they do not possess intellect sufficient for their ever becoming a useful class in a free condition; and these sapient judges do not admit that any man can know the character of the negro (or to use their own phrase,—What experience has he of the negro character?) who has not gone through the stages of *mental* and *moral* improvement, or in other words, the routine of book-keeper and overseer. But without underrating the discrimination of these gentlemen, it may with some degree of truth be said, that they are still in ignorance of that which they pretend to know; their conclusions are all drawn from *experience* in slavery when the negro was neither allowed to think nor to act for himself. If he dared to offer an opinion to his overseer, it was construed into insolence, and he was punished for it. On the one hand, not the body, but the mind of the slave was in fetters, so that whatever intellect he might possess, he was not allowed to exercise it; and on the other, the master managed the good, bad, and indifferent, by the same *physical argument*.

It is only now that the mental qualities, the vicious propensities, or the virtues of the negroes are discovered, and that those who have charge of them, or who mingle with them, can have an opportunity of discriminating between the good and the bad in disposition.

I am disposed to ascribe to them the possession of intellect sufficient for all useful purposes. It is true, that some of the Africans are very stupid, and even in their youth could not have been taught to know any thing which required mind;

but there are others, natives of a different portion of that extensive country, who are very intelligent, industrious, and faithful ; while as to the creoles, they are in general acute in observation, and quick in apprehension. I have found some of the boys and girls learn to read with great facility. They appreciate kindness, indulgence, and liberality from their master, if these are judiciously exercised, as a reward for good conduct ; but if they are exercised indiscriminately, harm will be done in place of good. It has often been remarked, that the negroes who had been most indulged, and most kindly treated, were the first to rebel, or become discontented, which is no doubt true, for kindness will always have this effect, unless it comes from one whom they both respect and fear. Let benevolence towards them, be accompanied with increased vigilance on the part of the master, that they do their duty, for if he relaxes in his attention, they are sure to fall off. If he expects that his kindness will be a sufficient guarantee for their discharging their duty without his detecting all their faults, he will be mistaken. But this is very much the case with the peasantry in a civilized country, and is only what may be expected from a people just emerging from slavery. Indeed, I do not think they are less virtuous or more vicious than was to be expected, from the example which had been set before them, by their superiors, and from their degraded and ignorant state. I have no hesitation in repeating, that they possess mental qualities, which, if cultivated, will render them a useful, industrious, and moral labouring class. This, however, will not be the case, without a considerable expenditure of money, and without great care and exertion on the part of the proprietors, and all others possessing wealth and influence. If the negroes are left to themselves, the little civilization which they have acquired will soon disappear, and they will sink into a state of barbarity. They will bask in the sun, and be contented to live on yams and cocoa, with a piece of osnaburgh or baize to cover their nakedness. Then will the expensive and beau-

tiful works and houses in Jamaica become ruins, and the fertile sugar plains and coffee mountains, scenes of desolation. An intermediate state from slavery to freedom was absolutely necessary, and the apprenticeship would be productive of great advantage to all parties, if it were properly managed, and to none more than the apprentice.

If the negroes are not working well in some places, and if a good understanding does not exist amongst all classes, it is not the fault of the apprenticeship. The fault is in the conduct of those in authority, viz. the governor, the special magistrates, and the managers.

The home government has done great injury to the apprentices and to the country, by depriving those interested in the soil from having any legal controul over them; for if the peasantry are to be improved at all, it must be by the capital, exertions, and attention of the planters. It never can be through the means of the governor and the special magistrates. The former seeks the appointment from a desire to retrieve his embarrassed circumstances, and gets it from the party with whom he is connected in politics, frequently without due regard as to whether he possesses the talent, the honour, the dignity, and the business-habits necessary for so important an office. He seldom possesses any property in the colony, and is not identified with it in any way; and his chief object is to make himself popular with the party who procured him his appointment.

The latter get their appointment by interest also,—have no property in the country, and will quit it at the termination of the apprenticeship on a pension, (if they can procure one) which they will spend at home. Jamaica and all her interests may then go to ruin. The peasantry will then find that they have been trusting to a broken reed, and will regret having been alienated from their natural protectors and supporters, by whose wealth alone they can be improved in mind as well as in personal comforts. There are a few men of colour, natives of the colony, in the magistracy.

Although not possessed of much property, yet having been educated in England, and being naturally talented, at the same time identified with the colony for life, they may be depended upon as desirous of promoting its interests. It is but fair that these men should occupy stations in society corresponding to their education and character; and if they can only forget the injustice with which they at one time were treated, and the prejudices which existed against them, and act with impartiality and without prejudice to any party, they will be very valuable members of the community; but if they act otherwise, they will be dangerous agitators.

As the apprentices are now quite aware of the extent of their privileges, that no manager has it in his power to punish them; and as many of the old-time planters have left the Island, while those who remain have in some measure accommodated themselves to the change, the government would do well to make the local magistrates, judges, along with the special magistrates, in cases between the masters and the apprentice where the former is not personally interested. This would lessen the labour of the special magistrates very much, and render it unnecessary for government to appoint any more to the office. Indeed, one half of those adjudicating now might be sent home, or be allowed to retire, retaining their salaries. This would re-establish the natural feeling between the peasantry and the proprietors, and induce the latter to take a greater interest in the moral improvement of the former. If an alteration to this effect were made in the laws, and if a greater number of proprietors were to reside on their properties, and take an interest in the conduct of the apprentices, by contributing to their education, and to their good conduct by their advice, as well as by good family example, we might yet see in Jamaica a moral and industrious peasantry, and a greater share of prosperity than that Island has ever enjoyed. Let me then strenuously advise all proprietors who have it in their power to quit home, to repair to Jamaica without delay, as it is the only way by which they will preserve the remnant

of their property to themselves and their families, as well as contribute to the general good of the Island. Do not let them, however, follow the old fashion of living in a *great house*, for if they do, their influence with the people will be lost, or rather, they will never acquire any. But let them make themselves personally acquainted with the apprentices, and manage their own concerns as far as they are capable of doing so ; they would thus live comfortably upon their own property, and under their superintendence the practical part of the planting might be conducted by industrious working men at very moderate wages. By the system here suggested, the expences of managing property would be much less than it is at present, including the proprietor's living, exclusive of wine. This might be a saving to the estate of L.500, or L.1000 or more, per annum, according to the style in which the proprietor lived at home.

If there was a better understanding between the home government and the influential portion of the people of Jamaica, and also between his Majesty's representative and the respectable class of the community, by which more unanimity of sentiment and action would be produced, much might yet be done during the apprenticeship for the improvement of the people. The apprenticeship was intended to benefit the apprentices, and so it does ; but it would benefit them much more if properly managed. Nothing can be more absurd than the hue and cry which has been raised by the anti-slavery party against the apprenticeship, the falsehoods which have been told of cruelties to the apprentices, and the motion which was made by F. Buxton to terminate it. Never did the advocates of any cause shew greater ignorance of their subject, than Mr. O'Connell and others did at the meeting at Birmingham. Their assertions were false, and their suggestions foolish. Had an eye-witness of what was passing in Jamaica been present ;—had he been sufficiently impartial, independent, and disposed to speak the truth, how effectually he would have refuted and turned to ridicule the base and malignant assertions made on that occa-

sion, and exposed to contempt the character which these actors assumed in the play. The petition which was presented from that humbug and theatrical-like meeting, was filled with falsehood and misrepresentation from beginning to end.

“The system of apprenticeship,” say they, “has been made an instrument of the basest fraud and the most cruel oppression ;—even many of the stipendiary magistrates sent out from this country as the guardians of the negro have become the mere tools of the planters, and have sanctioned by their authority, for the purpose of extorting labour, the infliction of corporal punishment to a *fearful extent*.”

No assertions could be more false and calumnious than this. Some of the special magistrates may have permitted themselves to be made the tools of the governor, and the party who procured them their appointment ; but what could induce them to be tools of the planters ? Surely these petitioners are aware, that no apprentice is punished except by evidence upon oath, whoever the witness may be ; and it is generally by the evidence of apprentices that the accused is found guilty. If, therefore, decisions are given, as described by the petitioners, the whole party must be guilty of perjury in making up a case against the poor apprentice, where no fault exists. The petitioners also assert, that the few who have had the independence to oppose this oppression, have left the island in disgust. I doubt not this excuse has been given by some of those who have returned home, for the purpose of procuring some other situation, but the whole community will refute this false though very plausible tale. Those that returned, and did not do so from bad health, either found themselves unfit for their situations, or dreaded the effects of the climate.

The petitioners farther assert, that the apprentice “has not the same comforts which he had when a slave, nor the same time to work his grounds.” If he is industrious and well behaved, he has the same allowances which he had previously. He can work the same ground, and work for hire a day in

each week to his master. The wages for this day would procure for him better clothes than he had before, as well as other comforts ; but if he is lazy, no matter what time he has at his own disposal, it will be spent in loitering about the negro houses, or in wandering about the country. It is to be regretted that this is the way with too many of them, and it may be ascribed in some measure to the ill-timed interference of the petitioners, and to the present system of authority.

The author begs it to be understood, that this is not mere conjecture or supposition, as he speaks from experience of his own people, and what he has seen among others. The former have worked for wages in their own time from 1st August 1834 till 1st August 1836, to the amount of about L.400, and kept their grounds in better order than they were before ; but while they were doing so, he has seen many of his neighbours' apprentices basking in the sun without any one telling them they were doing wrong. The truth is, the character and habits of these negroes have yet to be formed ; and who is to do so but those who are constantly about them, who have an opportunity of knowing all their transactions, who have the means of rewarding virtue and industry, and who ought to have the authority to punish vice and indolence ? It is neither the governor nor the special magistrate who can do this. It must, however, be admitted, that few of the managers have hitherto taken the necessary trouble with the apprentices, or felt sufficient interest in them ; but from the change which has taken place, if the present system of authority was altered to a certain extent, it is to be presumed they would.

There are certain beneficial consequences which naturally result to the apprentices from the apprenticeship, independent of any effort being made to improve their minds, which will prepare them so far for entire freedom. During slavery there was an unmeaning and invidious distinction kept up between the bound and the free of the same class, which checked the improvement of the former, and encouraged

villany and idleness in the latter. Those slaves who had been emancipated, thought they were exempt from labour, and generally lived on their slave connections. A free person was always admitted by a slave as superior. Since slavery ceased, this fallacious distinction has disappeared; the apprentice has been raised in his own estimation, and has a wider and a more unrestricted intercourse with the world, which will improve the minds of the well-disposed, although at the same time it encreases crime in those whose wild dispositions were subdued formerly by the existence of slavery. While the improvement of the one portion, however, is advancing, the crimes of the other will be checked by the exemplary public punishment which the law is daily inflicting.

There are other advantages of great importance emanating from the apprenticeship. About one-tenth of the apprentices are invalid, do not work to their master, but they have their houses, grounds, and clothing from the property. About one-tenth are weakly, partly from age, from sores and disease peculiar to the Africans, whose labour is not adequate to the value of the privileges they have from their master, and whom no person would care to hire if the apprenticeship was at an end.

About one-tenth are young apprentices who do very little work, only carry hogs' meat or grass, or attend small stock. Then, again, about one-sixth are non-apprentices, who are maintained on the property. They assist their parents to work the provision grounds for their own maintenance, and also for sale. If there was no apprenticeship, a great portion of the non-effectives here referred to would either starve, or must be supported by charity. In case that some may doubt the accuracy of this statement as to the number of non-effective people, I subjoin an account of those belonging to myself. The statement was drawn up while at sea, so that the author had not the necessary documents to which he might refer; but the general accuracy of the items may be depended on.

Whole number on my property,	-	-				496
Non-apprentices,	-	-	-	-	-	82
						<hr/> 414
Invalids who do no work,	-	-	-	-	-	41
						<hr/> 373
Weakly people who do very little work, not as much as would pay for their houses and grounds,					-	48
						<hr/> 265
Besides the above number, there are about 60 breeding women and mothers of children whose labour is not equal to	-	-	-	-	-	30
						<hr/>
Number of effective labourers who would be hired if there was no apprenticeship,	-	-	-	-	-	235

Thus it appears, that by the apprenticeship about one-half of the whole number are secured in a tolerably comfortable living, many of whom would be entirely dependent on charity, while others would not make as much of their labour as would procure for them the comforts which they enjoy in virtue of the apprenticeship.

Indeed, suppose the whole 496 to be one family, and those working for hire who are able to work, and suppose the surplus of their earnings, beyond what they required for their own maintenance, were to be appropriated for the support of the others, the whole would not have the comforts which they at present enjoy, where the owner is present, and where he takes that charge of the people which it is natural and proper for him to do. The apprenticeship has also the effect of keeping them more together, and interesting the proprietor in them. As previously said, where this natural and reciprocal feeling is not cultivated, by neglect on the manager's part, or by an uncalled for interference on the part of the

special magistrates, the people will make little improvement in their minds, and add nothing to their personal comforts.

It has been already stated, that the apprentices possess many good qualities, which, if cultivated, will make them a useful people. We must encourage that taste for good clothing which they already possess; we must induce them to imbibe a desire for artificial wants in the way of living, and in the ornaments of their houses; we must expel, as soon as possible, many of the superstitious notions which they at present entertain, improve their minds, and correct their immoral practices, by teaching them to read their Bibles, and inculcating the principles of true religion. Of the necessity of all this, the apprentices themselves have not the most distant notion, and it requires influence on the part of the proprietor, or whoever may undertake this task, of accomplishing it; nay, where this influence is wanting, the enforcement of the law will be necessary, and this influence is almost nowhere to be found, for the reasons previously stated.

Until the influence of education be spread among them, they will be totally insensible to its value. The parents are not desirous that their children should learn to read, because they know nothing of the value of education themselves. Although on the property of the author there is a schoolmaster for the use of the people alone, they neither appreciate the value, nor take advantage of the opportunity thus afforded them, as they ought to do.

It may be expected, that many of the industrious among the apprentices who have saved a few pounds, will endeavour to purchase an acre or two of land, on which they will erect a hut, and that to the cultivation of this spot they will give the labour of themselves and their families. Those who can afford to purchase a greater quantity of land will harbour the lazy about them, whose labour they will occasionally get for affording them a home and a mean subsistence, while the more vicious, who are desirous of being without the pale of law, will take possession of back lands, live on such provisions as they can raise, and will only venture into the popu-

lous districts for the purpose of exchanging ground provisions for herrings, committing depredations, or receiving stolen goods.

If these opportunities are allowed, the civilization of the peasantry will cease. The improvement which has already taken place will soon vanish, and leave not a trace behind ; and in the course of a century, the peasantry of Jamaica will become as ignorant, as superstitious, and as barbarous as their ancestors are in their native land.

To prevent such results, the dispatch of Lord Glenelg to the Marquis of Sligo of 30th January 1836, regarding crown-lands, &c. is deserving the serious attention of the Governor, the Assembly, and proprietors of Jamaica. His Lordship seems to take a very correct view of the natural consequences which will result from the state of the peasantry and the un-occupancy of the lands, unless checked by suitable provisions and legislative enactments.

His Lordships' suggestions regarding the crown-lands are certainly very judicious, but although there is much land unoccupied in Jamaica, the crown owns but a small proportion of it.

These lands belong to individuals, although the owner in many cases may not be known, and the lands may be forfeited for the non-payment of the rent, and unless immediately claimed, will be taken up by the crown.

A law might be made to prevent the sale of land in smaller patches than ten, fifteen, or twenty acres. Such a law may appear arbitrary, both towards the buyer and seller, but the state of the country would justify its existence for a time. The price and quantity, however, would depend upon localities, situation, and the quality of the soil. Near towns the quantity may be smaller, because the land is more valuable, and the purchasers would be more respectable. Every measure ought to be adopted, which is calculated to secure the cultivation of the already improved lands, and to keep the population sufficiently dense in those districts where the soil is

most valuable, and where the greatest capital is invested. The cultivation of the back lands should keep pace with the increase of the population.

Schools should be established in such districts, and also churches, and all who have any influence with the apprentices should use it in persuading them to send their children to school, while the influential part of the community should set the example to the apprentices of attending church on Sunday, (for at present they only attend those places from curiosity, and, if their eyes are opened, to see you); this may ultimately impress their minds with a sense of their own ignorance, and the value of education to their children. When this is done, they will not be desirous of leaving a place where they enjoy such important advantages.

But, besides the persuasive influence of those who have any controul over the apprentices, it will be necessary to enact laws to oblige parents to send their children to school, and to contribute to defray the expense of educating them to a certain extent, by a day's labour in the month, or so. This contribution on the part of the parents would have the effect of promoting an interest in the education of their children, and law would oblige them to discharge a duty at first, which they would soon do voluntarily, and with pleasure.

However strange it may appear to a civilized community that parents should despise the boon which is offered to them of educating their children gratis, yet this is the case with the apprentices in Jamaica at present. They are also perfectly callous and indifferent with regard to religious instruction. When a place of worship is opened, they will attend it for a day or two from novelty, particularly if they have a good suit of clothes to put on, but they are neither impressed with any serious motive, nor are they excited by any internal desire to know that truth, which is the wisdom and power of God unto salvation, or any thing regarding a future state. This, however, is only what may be expected from their past habits and present ignorance. The author has experienced the callousness of his own people

in this respect, and has been much mortified by it, for as he has previously stated, they have not hitherto appreciated the opportunities which he has given them of learning the principles of religion, and of having their children educated. They have, however, attended the Sunday School, and the place of worship, pretty regularly, more from a desire to please their master, and because it is his request, than from any other motive. But the trouble and expense attending this effort will be amply repaid if he succeeds in impressing on their minds the importance and value of education, and awakening a concern for their eternal welfare. He does not despair that by perseverance he will accomplish these important ends.

Useful impressions would be much sooner made, were it not for the influence of the Baptists. Those amongst the people who belong to that sect, are wedded to certain superstitious ceremonies which greatly retard the spread of useful knowledge. Previous to the author residing on his own property, and taking this interest in his people, and making the provision for their moral improvement here referred to, many of those rather advanced in life had joined an illiterate Baptist congregation in Kingston. The person who acts as clergyman of this congregation is an uneducated man, and incapable of instructing his followers in the principles of religion on any well-regulated and organized plan. He contrives, however, to exercise an influence over them by quarterly or yearly ceremonies at the church in Kingston, and by sending persons, whom he calls leaders, into the country, (for he has members of his church fifty miles from town), to hold meetings, to administer the sacrament, and to levy contributions. These persons appoint others whom they call *daddies*, on the different properties, to inculcate on the minds of the people such superstitious notions as they themselves propagate.

The *daddies* hold nightly meetings on different properties, perhaps two or three nights in the week, where they sing and pray from eight or nine o'clock till four or five next morning. Not one of the persons, who preside on these occasions, can

read their Bibles, and although their motives may be good, it is impossible they can convey to the people any just views of religion. Besides, such meetings exhaust the people as well as lead to improprieties of conduct ; and when held on Saturday night, unfit them for attending the proper place of worship on Sunday, where they would learn their catechism, hear the Scriptures explained, and receive much useful information.

The author expects that as education spreads amongst the people, these nightly meetings and superstitious notions will vanish. Every effort should be made to support and encourage the one, and to discountenance and annihilate the other.

The apprentices have no idea of the value of time, and will always loiter away a portion of that which is their own to no purpose, unless looked after by some person who has influence over them. In general, at present, as matters are going on, no one cares or knows how the apprentices spend their own time. The influence of the local magistrate has been destroyed, because he is not allowed to adjudicate in those matters which most materially affect the apprentices ; the greater number of managers care little about them beyond the performance of labour ; and those who feel an interest in their improvement, make enquiries into their private conduct, and offer advice, in place of being listened to may be insulted with, " Hie, massa, na, you wee time."—" You no *peshal* *magister*." The special magistrate has no opportunity of knowing the private character of the apprentices, and checking indolence during their own time, although he is the only person whose voice would be listened to.

The author of the foregoing observations has been induced to publish them, principally from a desire to excite the attention of proprietors, and to induce them to go out to Jamaica. He has also been influenced by a wish to convey minute local information, to those who are anxious to promote the interest of the colonies, but who only possess general information, and that too, not from an authentic source. He begs it to be distinctly understood that he is actuated by no bad feeling towards any

one who happens for the time to discharge the duties of the various departments to which he has alluded, and that nothing is farther from his intention than to lead any one to suppose that the special magistrates and overseers are not in general an honest, honourable, and intelligent class of men. The system and fashions of past times have led to the abuses complained of in management ; and it is the office of the special magistrates, which the author complains of, not the men who discharge its duties.





























































































